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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0871
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)
SUBJECT: ALN AND MRS JOINTLY LEVERAGING SELECTION OF NEW
ASSEMBLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) Deputies-elect of the Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN) and the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS) legislative caucuses are jointly leveraging the selection of the National Assembly's new Board of Directors to be formed by January 9, 2007. ALN Assembly deputy Yamileth Bonilla and MRS deputy Monica Baltodano told polcouns on December 14 that in their negotiations with the National Liberation Front (FSLN), the two caucuses are arguing that their combined 28 seats represent the second force in the new legislature. Rival Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) holds 25 seats. According to Bonilla and Baltodano, their parties will also jointly challenge the FSLN to break its longstanding political power sharing pact with the PLC caudillo Arnoldo Aleman.

¶2. (C) Bonilla related that the ALN is angling for either the presidency or the first secretary of the Assembly's Board of Directors, and is pressing the FSLN to live up to its campaign pledge to foster a government of reconciliation, tolerance, and unity. Additionally, the ALN is lobbying to chair the Defense and Government committees and to obtain other positions in the Municipal, Education, and Health committees, said Bonilla.

¶3. (C) Regarding the scheduled entry into force of the Framework Law (Ley Marco) -- which erodes the power of the executive branch and reinforces the FSLN-PLC pact's control over a number of regulatory entities -- Bonilla reported that the FSLN is privately pleased with ALN president Eduardo Montealegre's proposal to extend the implementation of the Ley Marco for another year. She explained that Montealegre's initiative has "scored points" with the FSLN.

¶4. (C) Comment: Former MRS presidential candidate Herty Lewites, who died suddenly in early July and was replaced by Edmundo Jarquin, had reached an understanding with Montealegre that the two parties would support one another and promote a legislative agenda to benefit the Nicaraguan people. Jarquin continued with this commitment, and incoming MRS and ALN lawmakers now appear to be acting on it. The degree to which the MRS and ALN can join forces to effect constructive change in the new legislature and reduce the power of the FSLN-PLC pact will partly determine whether Nicaragua's political culture can evolve from its current state of mafia politics and patronage. Civil society's role will also be determinant. End Comment.

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